Integrated Steels Ltd., for a composite unit for steel making and manufacture of 1,20,000 tonnes per annum of cold rolled carbon steel strips. The third letter of intent issued to Shri V. C. Saraf for manufacturing of 50,000 tonnes per annum of Mild Steel Ingots/Slabs was cancelled in 1987.

(c) Conversion of the letters of intent into licences would depend upon the satisfactory compliance with all the stipulations laid down by the Government.

Increase in the prices of essential commodities

*58. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a considerable increase in the prices of essential commodities during the last one year;

(b) if so, how it compare with the last one year; and

(c) whether Government propose to take any step to bring down the prices of essential commodities; and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) to (c) The prices of essential commodities have shown a mixed trend during the past one year ending 4-2-1989. Whereas there has been increase in the prices of pulses (except arhar), wheat, atta, jowar, milk and chillies, prices of certain other essential commodities like edible oils, bajra and onions have declined during the past one year. Some other commodities like soft coke, kerosene, and matches remained steady during this period.

2. Compared to the prices prevailing in the corresponding one year period in 1988 (i.e. between 7-2-87 and 6-2-1988 during this year prices of some commodities such as arhar, bajra, groundnut oil, mustard oil, etc., have been lower. The rate of increase in price of rice has also been lower during this year. However, certain other commodities such as wheat, jowar, gram, masoor, urad, milk, etc., have exhibited a higher rate of increase during the last one year in comparison to the corresponding period of the last year.

3. Wholesale Price index of all commodities during the past one year as on 4-2-1989 has increased by only 5.4 per cent in comparison to increase of 10.3 per cent in the last corresponding year ending 6-2-1988.

4. Government has taken several measures to improve the availability of the essential commodities and contain their prices. The main thrust of the Government's policy is to increase production of various essential commodities particularly those which are in short supply. Measures such as import of certain commodities for example, rice, wheat, edible oils, pulses, petroleum products are taken to augment domestic supply. The exports of certain essential commodities such as pulses, edible oils, meat are also regulated. Public Distribution has been expanded and improved. Prices and availability of essential commodities are closely monitored by the Central as well as State Governments. Enforcement measures against hoarders, blackmarketeers and anti-social elements are taken by the State Governments under the provisions of Essential Commidities Act and similar other legislations.

Quarantine and Fumigation facilities for Imported Seeds

*59. SHRI RAMNARAYAN GOSWAMI:

SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the country have sufficient quarantine and fumigation facil-

lities for import of vegetable and flower seeds under OGL; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BHAJAN LAL): (a) and (b) Under Open General Licence, the vegetable and flower seeds are to be imported through the sea|air ports of Amritsar, Bombay, Calcutta; Delhi and Madras. The capacities of the existing Plant Quarantine and Fumigation Stations at these places are given in the statement laid on the Table of the Sabha. (*See* below). These capacities will need strengthening to handle the expected additional imports of seeds of vegetables and flowers. For this purpose a programme has been drawn up to strengthen these Stations by way of provision of well equipped laboratories, modern equipment and other infrastructural facilities and suitable manpower.

The existing capacity to handle seeds and propagating material from Plant Quarantine engle at five major Plant Quarantine and Fumigation Stations (P.Q. and F.S.) at Amritsar Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi and Madras is as under:—

Statement

Sl. No.	Name of P.Q.& F.S.	Existing capacity per annum Kg./Nos.
1	Amritsar	19,200 Kg. / 86,400 Nos.
2	Bombay	48,000 Kg. / 2,16,000 Nos.
3	Calcutta	33,600 Kg. / 1,51,200 Nos.
4	Delhi	24,000 Kg. / 1,08,000 Nos.
5	Madras	19,200 Kg. / 86,400 Nos.

Wage Boards Report for Journalists and Non-Journalists Newspaper Employees

*60. SHRI KAPIL VERMA:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) what work has been completed by the wage boards for working journalists and non-journalists employees of Newspapers and News Agencies;

(b) by when the boards would finally submit their reports and whether Government propose to take any steps to ensure that the reports are submitted by March 31, 1989 finally and that no further extension is required; and

(c) by when Government are likely to announce their decision on the wage boards recommendations?